

THE MINUTES OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE
TURNPIKE ROADS FROM LIVERPOOL TO
PRESCOT, ST. HELENS, WARRINGTON AND
ASHTON IN MAKERFIELD, 1726-89.

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PART I, 1726-1753.

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THREE vellum-bound folio volumes, containing the minutes of the Trustees or Commissioners for one of the earliest Lancashire Turnpikes,¹ in the years 1726-53, 1753-71 and 1771-89 respectively, have recently come to light.² They present a mass of detailed information, which we cannot attempt to examine at all exhaustively in these pages. The present paper utilises merely a selection of this material, supplemented from sundry other sources, for the purpose of reviewing briefly the history, organisation, methods and accomplishments of the Turnpike during those years.

The Turnpike Trust is a statutory authority, its existence being dependent on, and conditioned by, a succession of Acts of Parliament. In this case, the Trust was created by an Act passed on 26 April, 1726,³ for the repair of the eight-miles road from Liverpool to Prescott, and a one-mile branch road along Twig Lane, through

¹ The earliest Turnpike Acts for Lancashire were: Buxton, etc., to Manchester (only partly in Lancashire), 24 March, 1724/5; Warrington to Wigan, and Wigan to Preston, 24 April, 1726; Liverpool to Prescott, 26 April, 1726.

² They were found at Prescott by Mr. W. A. Cross, solicitor, in his offices, which were occupied a century ago by William Rowson, Clerk to the Turnpike.

³ William Harrison, a former student of local Turnpike history, assigned this Act to 1725, the second to 1744, and the third to 1752 (*L. & C. Antiquarian Soc.*, vols. 4 and 10). The dates given above are those of the royal assent.

Roby, to Blacklow Brow in Huyton¹ (see Plan). The term was the normal one of twenty-one years. By a second Act, passed on 4 June, 1746, the term was renewed, the Turnpike extended eastwards for four miles from Prescott to St. Helens, and the branch turnpike altered by being taken from Old Swan along Petticoat Lane (known to-day as Broad Green Road) instead of along Twig Lane. A third Act, passed on 17 April, 1753, extended the Turnpike still further eastwards, from Prescott to Warrington (ten miles) and from St. Helens to Ashton (five miles), thus linking up in two places with the turnpike road from Warrington to Wigan, which was managed by a separate trust. By a fourth Act, passed on 8 May, 1771, two minor extensions were made, namely, Limekiln Lane (known to-day as Lime Street) in Liverpool, and Blue Bell Lane in Huyton. No further Act was passed for this Turnpike during the period under review, but later, by an Act passed on 3 June, 1802, the branch turnpike was again altered by the substitution of Huyton Lane for Blue Bell Lane.

The reasons for the creation of this Turnpike are revealed in the *Liverpool Town Books*, the *House of Commons Journals*, and the preamble of the Act of 1726. In November, 1725, an order was made by the Common Council of Liverpool as follows :

“ This Councill, takeing into Consideration that the Road between this Town and Prescott hath been almost unpassable, and that the Inhabitants of this Town have suffer'd much for want of getting their Coales home Dureing the Summer season, thro' the Great Rains that have happen'd in these parts, and that it would be highly necessary to Gett an Act of Parliam't for the Repairing that Road, so that it may be passable at all times of the year, and for Erecting A turnpike thereon, It is

¹ The original bill provided for a different branch road, viz. along Pilch Lane, through Roby and Huyton, and along Highhurst Lane (now Huyton Lane), but it was amended in the Commons (*H. of C. Journals*, vol. 20, pp. 610, 614, 658).

Now Order'd That a Petition to the Parliam't for that purpose be prepar'd."

A further order of the Common Council, in January 1725/6, runs :

" The Councill, takeing into their further Consideration the Great Charge of Bringing Coales and Merchandizes to this Town and Port in bad Weather, and especially in the Winter Season, and at all times when the Weather happens to be Wett and unseasonable, as it hath happen'd the last Summer, and that the Roads to the Coalpitts, and particularly to Prescottt, cannot be suff. Repair'd by the Statute Work as it will be passable att such times without the help and Assistance of A toll, It is now Order'd and Agreed that Application be made to the Parliam't to Obtain an Act for that purpose, and that the Treasurer Doe advance One half of the charge." ¹

The above records leave no doubt that the primary object of the Turnpike was to facilitate the transport of coal to Liverpool. The difficulties of the Liverpool people, prior to the turnpiking of the road to Prescot, are further explained in the following statement made by John Eyes in 1746, that

" the Inhabitants of Liverpoole usually furnished themselves in Summer with Coals for the whole Year, if they could get them ; but that that Method was attended with great Inconveniences, People being often obliged to wait a considerable time at Prescottt, before they could be supplied ; there not being, in general, a sufficient Quantity of Coals upon the Bank to answer the Demand ; and many poor People not being able to lay in such a Stock as would serve them all the Year." ²

For the purposes of the application to Parliament, the Borough Treasurer was instructed to advance 3 guineas to James Chadwick for the surveying, measuring and mapping of the road.³ This and other sums advanced

¹ J. Touzeau, *Rise and Progress of Liverpool*, vol. 1, 1910, pp. 416-17, quoting the *Liverpool Town Books*.

² H. of C. *Journals*, vol. 25, p. 80.

³ Touzeau, op. cit., p. 417. Chadwick had made a plan of Liverpool itself in 1725.

to meet the costs of the Act were repaid by the Turnpike as a first charge on its funds.¹

An abstract of the petition to Parliament, and of the evidence given in support, appears in the *Commons Journals*.² The petition is stated to be from "the several Gentlemen, Merchants, Tradesmen, and other Inhabitants, living in and near the Road from Liverpoole to Prescott." It set forth

"That the Road . . . is very much used in the Carriage of Coals [to Liverpoole, and also from Liverpoole]³ to the Towns of Wigan, Bolton, Ratchdale, Warrington, and Manchester, and to the Counties of York, Derby, and other Eastern Parts of the Kingdom, in the Carriage of Wool, Cotton, Malt, and all other Merchants Goods; whereby several Parts of the said Road are so very deep, and other Parts so narrow, that Coaches, Waggon, and other Wheel-carriages, cannot pass through the same; nor can the same be effectually repaired and enlarged, without some further Provision be made for that Purpose."

Ralph Peters, Town Clerk of Liverpool, George Byrom, surveyor, and John Woods gave evidence,

"Who, being severally examined, said, That the Road . . . is much used in the Carriage of Coal to the several adjacent Towns; and that the same is so very bad, that Passengers cannot pass and repass, without great Difficulty; even in the Summer Season, after Rains:

"That all the Witnesses said, the Statute-work⁴ has been constantly done; and Six Pence, Eight Pence, and Ten Pence, in the Pound, has been laid upon, and paid by the Inhabitants, over and above the Statute-work;⁵ which has not been sufficient to repair the Roads:

¹ See p. 169. Touzeau (*ibid.*) seems to have assumed that these sums were not expected to be repaid.

² H. of C. *Journals*, vol. 20, p. 568.

³ Some such words seem to have been omitted through a printer's error.

⁴ This was the compulsory annual service in roadmending due from the inhabitants of each township by Stat. 3 Ph. & M., c. 8, 1555, and 5 Eliz., c. 13, 1562-3. Three of the six days' service were allotted to the Turnpike by the Act of 1726.

⁵ Quarter Sessions had power to levy a highway rate up to 6*d.* in the pound, where the statute labour was inadequate (Stat. 13 & 14 Car. II, c. 6, 1662, and 22 Car. II, c. 12). The highway rate, but not the statute labour, was superseded by the Turnpike.

“ And the Witnesses further said, That, if Three times as much as the Inhabitants are obliged to do and pay were done and paid, it would not put the Roads into such Repair as Carriages might pass with safety ; and that, to make the Road commodious for Carriages, it will be necessary to widen some Parts of it.”

In the preamble of the Act,¹ the road is described as

“ the ancient Road from the said Town and Port of Liverpoole, to the Borough of Wigan, the Towns of Bolton, Bury, and Ratchdale, in the said County of Lancaster, and to the Towns of Halifax, Leeds, and the City of York, and all other Towns and Places in the County of York, and to all the Eastern Parts of this Kingdom, and the common Post Road through Warrington to London.”

The preamble goes on to say that the road,

“ by reason of many heavy Carriages of Goods and Merchandises passing through the same, is become ruinous and almost impassable, especially in the Winter Season.”

In order to appreciate what the Turnpike accomplished, we must try to envisage more clearly the pre-Turnpike road. The sources of definite information are rather meagre,² but several notable points emerge. Running through country that was largely enclosed, it consisted mostly of “ lane,” that is, restricted way bordered by hedges and ditches. At one side, along its whole course, ran a “ horse causeway,” a yard and a quarter in width, constructed of “ paving-stones ” (cobble), and, possibly, protected from the wheeled traffic of the adjacent cart-way by “ stoops ” (posts). The cart-way itself was not systematically paved, though, as there is much sandstone in the neighbourhood, the worst holes and ruts had doubtless been filled in with this material from time to time. On the whole, it was a road well enough suited

¹ Contemporary printed copies of the Acts of 1726, 1746, 1753 and 1771 are bound up, with other local Acts, in a volume entitled *Liverpool Acts of Parliament, 1699-1777*, in the Liverpool Public Library.

² Contemporary sources of information are quoted by William Harrison in *Pre-Turnpike Highways in Lancs. and Cheshire* (L. & C. Antiquarian Soc., vol. 9, 1891) and *Old-Time Travel in Lancashire* (in *Memorials of Old Lancashire*, vol. 1, 1909).

to the needs of the equestrian and the pack-horse. For the transport of heavy goods, such as coal, a causeway wide enough to accommodate carts was a requirement which, on account of the rapid development of Liverpool, was becoming more and more urgent.¹

The road between Liverpool and Warrington is not described in Ogilby's *Britannia* (1675), though it is indicated as a secondary road diverging from the "great road" at Warrington. There were actually two alternative routes, *via* Prescott and Farnworth respectively, the latter, a somewhat more direct and for the most part a lower road, being marked on the maps of Lancashire by Lea (1680) and Morden (1695). The road *via* Prescott is marked by Moll (1724), and its importance as the "common post road" in 1726 has been noted. The "ancient road" to the industrial regions of East Lancashire and Yorkshire branched from the Liverpool-Warrington road at Prescott.

The view, sometimes expressed by students of Liverpool history,² that the port was inaccessible to wheeled vehicles before the creation of the Turnpike, does not seem to be well founded. Though the Liverpool-Prescot road may have been too narrow in places for the large waggon, there can be no doubt that carts had long been used for conveying coal and earthenware from Prescott,³ and that the demand for the Turnpike was due to the difficulty

¹ As early as 1703, an order had been made by Prescott Court Leet for "Paveing a Causey in the Cart way, every yeare two rood," at the Liverpool side of Prescott town-end, as far as the "horse stone" in Fall Lane, now Derby Street (MS. Court Roll).

² e.g., Ramsay Muir stated: "A new public road to Prescott made carriage exit from Liverpool for the first time practicable" (*Hist. of Liverpool*, 1907, p. 178). A recent economic historian refers to the "marked isolation" of Liverpool, stating that "there were no carriage roads from Liverpool, and only pack-horse routes were available between the town and east Lancashire" (*England in the 18th Century*, by W. G. East, in *Historical Geography of England before 1800*, 1936, p. 500). Such statements will not bear examination.

³ The damage to Liverpool streets "by the frequent driving of Carts loaden with Coales and Muggs to the waterside through the same" created a problem as early as 1663 (Touzeau, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 263).

of coping with the increasing pressure upon the cart-way. We must nevertheless imagine the great bulk of the inland carrying-trade of Liverpool conducted by means of pack-horses, and by the flat-bottomed vessels which negotiated the shallows of the Mersey to and from Warrington.¹

In view of the official part played by Liverpool in the promotion of the Turnpike, we are not surprised to find its Mayor, Recorder and Aldermen specified in the Act as *ex-officio* Trustees, in addition to the ninety-seven prominent men of Liverpool, Prescot and the district who are actually named. There were accordingly about 120 Trustees in all, and the number was subsequently maintained by co-option. The names of those present at the meetings are usually recorded in the Minutes. In the period of 26½ years covered by the first volume, 182 meetings are recorded, of which three were attended by more than fifty Trustees, and 23 by more than twenty. No less than 102 meetings were attended by fewer than ten Trustees, and 29 by a bare quorum of five.

The Act directed that the first meeting should be held in the Common Hall at the Exchange in Liverpool on or before 20 May, 1726, and that it should then adjourn, being subsequently held there or in any other place convenient, as often as necessary. The Common Hall continued to be the usual place of meeting, though occasionally, at irregular intervals, the Trustees met elsewhere. The place of meeting is not invariably stated, but on at least eleven occasions it was Prescot, at the Legs of Man Inn (ten times) or Orrett's Coffee House (once). In 1730 a meeting was held at "Widow Gibson's" in West Derby; in 1732, at the "house of John Longworth" in Childwall; and in 1737, at "George Bispham's" in West Derby.

¹ In a letter dated 8 Jan., 1697/8, Thomas Patten, a Warrington merchant, refers to his having made the Mersey navigable from Liverpool to Warrington (*Norris Papers*, Chetham Soc., Old Series, vol. 9, p. 38).

Meetings were as a rule presided over by the Mayor of Liverpool or his deputy.

The meetings were not at first held on any particular day of the week, or at any regular interval of time, or at any fixed hour of the day. Usually, adjournments were made for a month, but sometimes they were for less, and frequently for more. In 1726, meetings were held on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; in 1727, nearly all were on Saturdays; subsequently, meetings at Liverpool were usually held on the first Tuesday in the month. Liverpool meetings were commonly at 2 p.m., but, as we shall see, this hour was not made compulsory until after an unpleasant episode in 1731. Notices of meetings were not sent to the Trustees individually, except by special order on rare occasions when the business was of particular importance. In August, 1731, an order was made

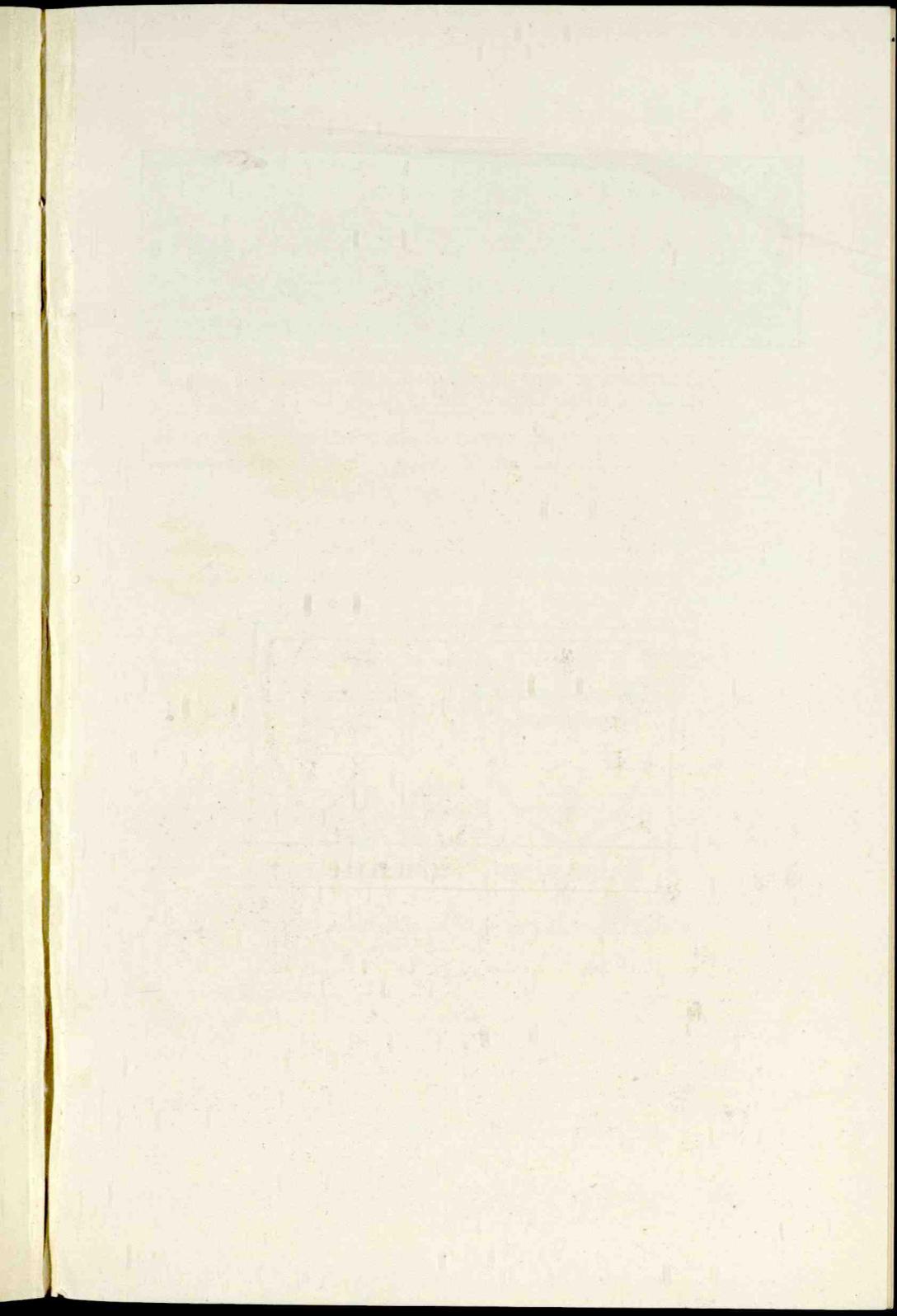
“that for the future, publick notices in writing shall be fix'd up, of every Meeting of the Commissioners, at the Exchange in Liverpoole, and upon the May Poll in Prescottt.”

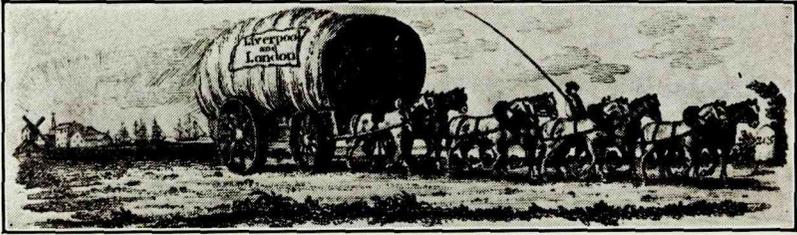
In February, 1744/5, a further order required that such notices should be put up at the Exchange six days before every meeting.

The first meeting, on 20 May, 1726, was attended by sixty-seven Trustees. First, the Act was read, and then the Trustees appointed a Clerk. William Peters,¹ son of the Town Clerk of Liverpool, was selected “by a Majority of the Trustees present . . . who testify'd their consent to the same in a Writeing Subscribed by them for that purpose.” Then came what the Minutes describe as a “dispute” about a proposal, by Isaac Greene,² for the appointment of a committee. Greene's plan is not explained at length, but presumably it was for placing the management in the hands of a select body or executive

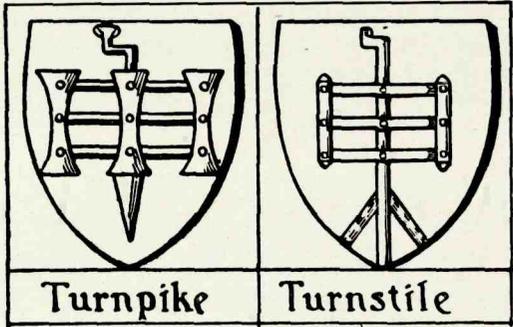
¹ He was born in 1702, and was a solicitor (Hist. Soc. L. & C., vol. 60, p. 55).

² For an account of this able and acquisitive attorney, see *Isaac Greene*, by R. Stewart-Brown, 1921.





LIVERPOOL AND LONDON STAGE WAGGON.
(Liverpool Public Library, Binns Coll., vol. 10, p. 141)



HERALDIC REPRESENTATION OF TURNPIKE
AND TURNSTILE.

(Coppinger's *Heraldry Simplified*, 1910, p. 153)

committee elected by and answerable to the Trustees as a whole. The alternative was to keep the business under the direct control of the general meeting, and this, perhaps out of respect for the terms of the Act, was the course favoured by the large majority present. A motion to adjourn the meeting to 1 June was carried by 59 votes against 8. Thereafter, the meetings continued to be open to all the Trustees throughout the period of these Minute Books, though special committees were often appointed for temporary purposes such as the viewing of lands or the audit of accounts. Greene apparently ceased to interest himself in the work, for he did not attend again until a special meeting was called in 1743.

At the second meeting twelve days later, attended by forty-four Trustees, an order was made for public notices to be put up "in proper places," inviting tenders for the supply of "Paveing Stones and other Materialls necessary for the Amending and Repairing the said Roads."

The third meeting, on 1 July, attended by forty-nine Trustees, made important decisions. Two "turnpikes"¹ were to be set up, one on the main Prescot road "at or about Whiteside's or Lurdy's Lane End," the other on the Roby road "at or about the End of Widow Price's Barn at Roby Town End." The first, known subsequently as the Huyton gate,² stood where the Eagle and Child Hotel is to-day. The second, known as the Roby gate, stood where the toll-house still remains. In addition, a "stop gate"³ was to be set up "across the Lane end leading out of Twigg Lane over Page Moss" (i.e. Dinas Lane), to prevent evasion of the two main gates. These

¹ A primitive form of turnpike is shown in the illustration opposite. It was well balanced, for the central post served as a pivot and bore the weight of the gate. It had a great advantage in leverage over the later type, which swung on hinges from a side-post, on which a great strain was imposed.

² Prior to 1753, it was usually called the Prescot gate, but we shall refer to it throughout as the Huyton gate in order to prevent confusion with the new gate set up in Prescot in 1753.

³ i.e., a subsidiary gate, preventing entrance from a side road.

sites were well chosen to intercept traffic along both roads, and were not subsequently altered. There were however about five miles of road which could be used gratis by people living on the Liverpool side of Huyton.

This meeting also appointed John Martindale and Richard Roby as Surveyors. They were to cease to act as Trustees, and were to be provided with signed warrants authorising them to execute their office. They were instructed to view the roads at once, and to set out in writing their opinions as to the breadth of the proposed "cart causway," the parts of the road in need of widening, the cost of the repairs, and the price of paving-stones and other materials; to obtain tenders from persons willing to undertake the repairs or furnish materials; and to have the toll-gates made ready forthwith. Finally, the Clerk was ordered to make inquiries with a view to borrowing the necessary funds.

At the fourth meeting, on 29 July, attended by thirty-nine Trustees, the Surveyors presented an estimate that the cart causeway would cost £880 a mile. There is reason to think that this amount was much in excess of what had been anticipated. Thomas Steers, a Trustee and an engineer of note,¹ then offered to make a causeway six yards wide, wholly of paving-stones, for the first two miles, at £700 a mile, and another Trustee, William Marsh, offered to pave the whole way to Prescot in the same manner at this price. Even so, the plan was evidently thought too costly, and the meeting ordered

"that publick Notice be given to all Persons that are minded to Undertake, that they make their Proposals next Meeting, and whether to be a Yard on each side the Pavement made with broken Stone or all pav'd with Paveing Stones or with other Materialls and only Side Stones."

¹ He was the engineer of Liverpool's first dock, opened in 1715, and was Mayor of Liverpool in 1739. An account of his career, by H. Peet, is in *Hist. Soc. L. & C.*, vol. 82.

This meeting also ordered the setting up of the turnpikes and the stop-gate, and the building of two houses for the collectors at the principal gates. The houses were to be not more than five yards in length and four in breadth, built either of brick or stone according to cheapness, thatched, and with no upper storey.

The next meeting, on 1 September, was attended by only nine Trustees, and transacted no business, being adjourned to 15 September. On the latter date sixty-four Trustees were present. They decided that the collection of tolls should begin on 2 February following (1726/7). Roger Walsh of Knowsley and James Chadwick of Liverpool ¹ were appointed collectors at Huyton and Roby gates at salaries of £16 and £12 a year respectively. Mr. Henry Hamer of Liverpool, linen-draper, was appointed Treasurer, at a salary of £25 a year. His duties were to supervise the collectors, receive all monies due by virtue of the Act, disburse them in accordance with the instructions of the Trustees, and keep proper accounts which were to be produced for inspection as often as required. This meeting also ordered the raising of a loan of £500 on the security of the tolls, stipulating that the costs of the Act of Parliament ² were to be paid off as a first charge; these decisions were fully authorised by the provisions of the Act itself.

Having reviewed the initial stages of the enterprise, we proceed to examine the progress of the most essential task, the repair of the road. We read that on 2 January, 1726/7,

¹ In June, 1727, James Chadwick was ordered by the Trustees to make a plan of the ways leading out of Twig Lane. Apparently, therefore, he may be identified with the maker of the plan of Liverpool, 1725, and that of the Prescot road, 1726. He died in 1733, his successor being appointed in June of that year.

² The costs of the Act are stated as follows: "Mr. Ra. Peters's Bill, £256. 4. 3. Mr. Edward Stanley's, £72. 7. 6. Mr. Geo. Byron's, £5. 7. 0. Mr. Jno. Woods's, £9. 18. 0. Mr. Wm. Rycroft's, £5 7. 0. James Chadwick's, £6. 9. 6. Mr. Richd. Halsall, £5. 5. 0. [Total] £360. 18. 3."

“Mr. John Martindale, one of the Surveyors, now giving in a Proposall or Scheme for levelling and repairing part of Prescott Road, vizt. from Lowhill to Berey’s Bridge, the same is now read and approv’d. And it is now order’d that the said Surveyors do forthwith go about to put the same in execution, and repair the same in the method he proposes, a Copy of which proposall and Estimate to be left with the Clerk. And that they also Repair the said Prescott Road from the Lane end leading out of Prescott Road to Mr. Wm. Marsh’s House as farr as Highfield Bridge¹ with all possible expedition, and to procure and get Stone and other Materials that shall be necessary for that purpose out of any of the Delfes and Grounds lying near or adjoining to the said Roads to be repair’d, where the same can be had most conveniently and cheapest and most serviceable for the purpose. And that the Expence thereof be defray’d with and out of the Moneys arising out of the said Tolls and Dutys as the same shall arise and be received.”

The details of Mr. Martindale’s proposals are not recorded in the Minutes, but later references show that in one respect at least, the width of the causeway, they represent a modification of the original plans of the Trustees. The six-yards causeway, for which estimates had been made in 1726, did not become an accomplished fact until 1760. Nowhere, unfortunately, do the Minutes state the width of the original cart causeway made by Martindale, though, as we shall see, a $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards causeway was ordered for the Roby road in 1744, and an eleven-feet causeway for the St. Helens road in 1749.

The Surveyors were ordered at the same time to give notice to the Supervisors of Highways of the townships in which the Turnpike lay, to attend the next meeting if desirous of compounding for their statute work; to treat with the owners of land needed “for opening and enlarging the narrow straight parts of the Roads”; and to give notice to the Surveyors of Bridges of West Derby Hun-

¹ No bridge of this name appears on the sundry old maps which I have examined. A later reference suggests that it may be identified with Brook Bridge, Prescot (see p. 173).

dred, of such parts of the road as were to be repaired at the charge of the Hundred.

The first parts of the new causeway were laid for about thirty yards on each side of the toll-gates. The methods of construction are not described. The materials were "paving-stones" (cobbles), "greet stone" (local free-stone) and sand. The cart causeway was apparently built alongside the old horse causeway, which was retained as a separate path for horse and foot passengers. No information appears as to whether any means of drainage, additional to the side ditches, were provided.

In November, 1727, Richard Roby having died, Henry Hamer, the Treasurer, was appointed as Assistant Surveyor also, at a combined salary of 30 guineas a year. The salary of Mr. Martindale as Surveyor was fixed at the same amount, "but no Allowance for Expences or Horsehire" in either case.

The work on the new causeway was suspended during the winter. The section from Low Hill to Berry's Bridge was evidently completed by June, 1728, for in that month orders were made for its continuation to the Huyton gate. The Trustees decided

"that the Way from Mockbeggar to Berey's Bridge be alter'd, and a new Way made thro' Mr. Tarbock's Ground, if Mr. Tarbock can be agreed with."

Two Trustees were appointed to treat with Mr. Tarbock, but, since the latter demanded £40, together with the ground of the old road, and in view of "the uncertain Demand of the Lord of the Manor, and that such alteration will but save four Rood,"¹ the plan was dropped. Meanwhile, the Surveyor had been ordered to "Carry on the Pavement from the Turnpike towards Mockbeggar Hall² as farr as they possibly can this Summer." Further

¹ The local rood of 8 yards is doubtless understood.

² This has been defined as "a house looking well outside, but having a poor interior" (Halliwell, *Dict. of Archaic and Provincial Words*).

directions for continuing the work are not recorded, and progress was probably hampered by financial difficulties, as will be explained later. The entire causeway from Low Hill, where a "meer stone" then marked the boundary of Liverpool, to Brook Bridge, the boundary of Prescot, was evidently completed before May, 1732, when the Surveyors were ordered to "levell, repair and Amend the Road from Liverpoole to Lowhill."

The latter order requires explanation. The Trustees had at first assumed, apparently, that the Turnpike would extend only between the outside bounds of the townships of Liverpool and Prescot, that is, from Low Hill to Brook Bridge. Inside the townships, the road was paved only within the built-up areas, there being in each case a stretch of unpaved road between the "town's-end" and the Turnpike,¹ for the repair of which the townships themselves were deemed responsible. With the increase of traffic along the Turnpike, the need for extending the cart causeway in these sections became imperative, and, in view of the expense, there was doubtless a strong feeling, on the part of the Trustees representing the two towns, that the task should be assumed by the Turnpike. The order of May, 1732, is thus accounted for, but later evidence shows that the work had not been done. In February, 1734/5, the Surveyor was ordered to

"give notice to the Executors of Mr. James Shaw, and the rest concerned in the Waterworks carrying on in the Road to Lowhill, that they make up their Walls on each side the Lane, between the Lane and their Lodges of Water near the Gallows Mill, and that then Mr. Martindale do cause the Road there, which is now very founderaus and bad, to be repaired and made good as speedily as may be, at the Charge of the Turnpike."

Further decisions were made in August, 1735, as follows :

¹ There was, however, already a cart causeway for part of this distance at the Prescot end (see p. 164, *n.*).

“ Order'd that that part of the Highway lying within the liberties of Prescot, from the Lane end leading up to Mr. Marsh's, to Prescott-Brook, be forthwith repaired at the Charge of the Turnpike, with the best of the Greet Stones that were taken out of the old Causey.

“ And Whereas an Order was made at the last General Quarter Sessions at Ormskirk, to Fine the Inhabitants of Liverpoole in Twenty Pounds if the Highway there betwixt Dale Street bridge and the Meer Stone near Lowe Hill, then Presented to be in decay, is not sufficiently repaired before next Michaelmas Sessions at Wigan : It is now also Ordered that Mr. John Martindale do forthwith cause that part of the said Highway . . . to be Re-paired and Paved at the Charge of the Turnpike, and that he be Indemnify'd and kept harmless at the Charge of the Turnpike for the same.”

There was evidently still some demur at such a course, for six months later the Trustees ordered

“ That a Case be stated by the Clerk, and some indifferent Councill's Opinion be taken thereon at the Charge of the Turnpike, how farr of the Road between Liverpoole and Prescott ought to be repaired at the Charge of the Turnpike, whether to the Street Ends of each of the said Towns, or only from the outside bounds or extent of the Parish of Liverpoole to the bounds or extent of the Township of Prescott.”

The statement of the case is entered at full length, together with the opinion of J. Strange, dated 21 April, 1736, that the Turnpike should extend “ from the Towns-end of Liverpoole to the Townsend of Prescot.” The cart causeway was therefore completed in accordance with this ruling. In the Act of 1746, all doubt was removed by a statement that the Turnpike ran from “ James Shaw's House ” in Liverpool to “ the Toll Bars, near the Sign of the Legs of Man ” in Prescot.

No order was made for the repair of the branch road through Roby until 1744, when the time was approaching for the renewal of the Act. The “ pavement ” here was to be $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards broad. In 1746, this work had been carried out only from Blacklow Brow to Roby gate, so that

Twig Lane, which was then dropped in favour of Petti-coat Lane, appears to have received little if any attention during its twenty years as a turnpike road.

The cart causeway, when made, had of course to be kept in repair, and this proved no small task. The wear and tear, due to an increasing volume of traffic, was intensified by the narrowness of the causeway. In 1746, John Eyes stated that the causeway was then

“much out of Repair, occasioned by the late Frosts . . . He had heard the Trustees intimate a Design to widen the said Causey, the same being at present too narrow for Carriages to pass each other.”¹

Such narrow causeways were scathingly condemned by Arthur Young when he toured these parts in 1770. By that date the Liverpool-Prescot causeway had been widened, but between Wigan and Warrington he travelled on a narrow causeway, of which he said :

“This is a paved road, and most infamously bad. Any person would imagine the people of the country had made it with a view to immediate destruction ; for the breadth is only sufficient for one carriage ; consequently it is cut at once into rutts ; and you will easily conceive what a break-down dislocating road rutts cut through a pavement must be . . . If they will pave, the breadth ought to be such as to admit several carriages abreast, or the inevitable consequence must be, the immediate cutting up.”²

It is not surprising therefore that in March, 1734, a committee of thirteen Trustees was appointed to view the road, decide which parts most needed repair, and order the work to be done as they thought fit—a proceeding which, however, seems to indicate a want of confidence in the Surveyor. In November, 1736, when the road had once more been put into good condition, the keeping of it in repair was put out to contract to

¹ H. of C. *Journals*, vol. 25, p. 80.

² A. Young, *Tour through the North of England*, 2nd ed., 1771, p. 432.

Thomas Cheshire and Edmund Holding, husbandmen, of West Derby, for a year, at a price of £40,

“ they to have the benefit of getting Rock and Sand in the said Roads, and to have the same Carted by the Statute Carts, and also to have the Statute Carts to Cart all the Paveing Stones which they shall have occasion for, and the same Stones to be paid for at the Turnpike Charge. And the said Undertakers to keep the Roads levell'd, and to Copp and Sett Stoops where needful, they having the assistance of the Statute Labourers.”

The “ cops ” (banks of earth) and “ stoops ” were apparently for the temporary protection of parts newly relaid. The contract was subsequently renewed for several years, but in 1740 the contractors alleged that they dared not continue for the same allowance. In 1745, we find that a man was being employed as “ Overseer of the Workmen ” at a wage of 1s. 2d. a working day. In November, 1746, a contract was made with a body of six paviors to keep the “ Cart and Foot Causey ” in repair for a year at a price of £120,

“ the Turnpike paying for the Land where the Sand is to be gott, and to allow the undertakers the Paveing stones now on the road, what is wanting more the Undertakers to pay for, the Undertakers to Pave and find Laborers and Carting, they haveing the Statute work . . . The undertakers are to Leave the road [*sic*] in as good repair as they are now, in the broken parts of the Causeyway, now being measured and in length being 160 Yards, it only being where the Cartwheel goes, of about One foot broad, there is not any part of the middle of the Causeway [broken] but one face and that being only about 3 yards.”

A year later the road was found to be in just as good condition. The contractors at first refused to continue at the same price, but when the Trustees decided to invite other tenders, they asked leave to reconsider the matter.

The Trustees were entitled to demand three days' statute work from the townships through which the road passed, namely, West Derby, Huyton-cum-Roby and

Knowsley. As we have seen, the Trustees were willing to allow them to compound, and in 1727 both Huyton and Knowsley offered £4 a year. West Derby apparently decided to wait and see. In September, 1727, the Surveyors were ordered to give notice to the Supervisors of Highways in West Derby to "bring in a List of all persons in that Townshipp chargeable to the Highways and what they are chargeable with." In June, 1728, an order was made,

"that those persons, Inhabitants of Westderby, that neglected to do their Statute Work last Year upon Summons, be forthwith prosecuted as the Act directs, first givinge them Notice."

In January, 1730/1, a similar order was made,

"that all the persons that have neglected to Send to Do their Statute Work, and are Returned by the Supervisors of the Highways in Westderby, be Summoned."

In August, 1732, a number of men,

"against whom Warrants were lately Issued for Levying the Penalties appointed by the Act for their not doing their Statute Work to the Turnpike Roads, Then Appeared and Declareing their ignorance and offering to pay the Charge of the Warrants and for the Officers Trouble, and that they are ready to perform their Statute Work for what is past, and to Attend when Summon'd for the future,"

the execution of the warrants was suspended, but the remaining defaulters were to be "immediately Summon'd and prosecuted if they neglect to do their Statute Work." At a meeting three months later, the Trustees ordered

"that if the persons who have made default in doing their Statute Work within Westderby shall Do what they have neglected, the Warrants to be Stopp'd, they paying the Charge."

In February, 1734/5, the Surveyor was ordered to prepare an estimate of the statute work done by each township in each year. A few months later, Knowsley again offered to compound for £4. Evidently the previous

offers by Huyton and Knowsley had not been accepted. Composition for statute labour was not mentioned in the Act of 1726, so the Trustees may have had doubts as to their powers in this respect. Any such doubts were removed by the Act of 1746, but there is no evidence that compositions were arranged before 1749, when the Surveyor was authorised to accept "5s. for the Cart and Eighteen Pence for a Spade Man."

The following order was made in June, 1749:

"Whereas complaint is now made that persons keeping Teams within the Township of Derby refuse to bring a spade or assist in Loading their Carts, it is hereby Order'd that such persons as do not comply with the Act of Parliament with respect to Statute Work that their names be return'd to us with an Account what time they neglect or what part of Duty they neglect to perform, in order to their being Prosecuted, and that this notice be published imediatly by being put into the hands of the Supervisors or one of them."

From time to time the Trustees had to make orders respecting nuisances of various kinds. In June, 1739, they ordered "That Mr. Shaw¹ do not lay any Broken Muggs in the Road." In April, 1740, they ordered "That no person be permitted to lay any Straw or other Stuff on the Causey which the Trustees are of opinion will keep it wett and be prejudicial." Apparently people did this for the sake of the manure. More serious was the difficulty of protecting new work until well settled. In December, 1738, the Trustees ordered that "every Carter who shall Drive his Cart over any new Work or pulls down any Cops or Stoops shall be prosecuted"; notices of this were to be put on the turnpike gates. The practice however, did not cease, and in August, 1743, it was further ordered "that any Part of the Road whilst repairing be chain'd out, and that no Person or Persons do presume to break the said Chain and go upon the said Road so in

¹ The proprietor of a pottery on Shaw's Brow, Liverpool.

repairing upon pain of being prosecuted for so doing." The Act of 1746 authorised the erection of fences at the beginning and end of any mile of road under repair, provided that space were left for carriages to pass each other.

One of the most important aspects of our subject is the question of the ways and means by which the Trustees secured the funds necessary for their work. By the Act, they were authorised not only to levy tolls, but also to raise loans at their own discretion on the security of the tolls. The sound management of finance affords the crucial test by which we may appraise the work of the Turnpike as a whole, for what it did was conditioned by the way it husbanded its resources. Dominated as it was by the leading members of a thriving mercantile community, in whose welfare it was itself a notable factor, we would expect, in relation to the general standards of the times, a good level of business efficiency. But let us not forget that in their financial administration the turnpike trusts as a whole have been subjected to very serious criticism.¹ Many weaknesses were inherent in the system itself, and gave rise to almost insuperable difficulties.

A maximum scale of tolls was prescribed by the Act, and may be summarised as follows : horses carrying coals, $\frac{1}{2}d.$; other horses, $1d.$; waggons carrying coals, $6d.$; other waggons, $1s. 0d.$; carts carrying coals, drawn by two horses, $2d.$, by three horses, $3d.$, and by four horses, $4d.$; carts carrying other goods, $6d.$; carts carrying earthenware, $8d.$; coaches, $1s. 0d.$; chaises, $6d.$; cattle, $\frac{1}{2}d.$; sheep, $\frac{1}{4}d.$ The tolls levied under various Turnpikes were apt to differ considerably, showing that they were fixed in accordance with local wishes. In this

¹ See the relevant sections in Jackman, *Development of Transportation in Modern England*, vol. 1, 1916, and Webb, *English Local Government*, vol. 4 ("Statutory Authorities"), 1922, and vol. 5 ("The King's Highway"), 1913.

instance, the special rates for the transport of coal and earthenware are notable. In the case of coal, the low toll emphasises the special need for abundant and cheap supplies to Liverpool. In the case of earthenware, the high toll was probably a protective measure for the Liverpool potteries against Prescot competition.

By the Act, exemption from toll was allowed to farm carts, carts returning empty, carts carrying manure or materials for road repair, cattle going to pasture or to and from Liverpool and Prescot fairs, post-horses, military horses and waggons, horses taking milk to Liverpool and Prescot or corn, butter and cheese to market, horses to or from the parish church on Sundays and at funerals, horses ridden by drivers of carts, loads of hay, straw and gorse brought to Liverpool and Prescot, and carts conveying vagrants with passes.

The Trustees settled a number of difficulties regarding tolls. In 1726, in consequence of a complaint from the "Prescott Butchers," they conceded that calves carried on horseback might pay 1*d.* instead of 1½*d.* In the same year, exemption was claimed for a funeral cortège going from West Derby to Sankey, but was not allowed. A similar appeal was made in 1730 respecting a funeral cortège from Prescot to Liverpool; this led to the making of an order that "Horses Carrying or attending any Corps" should pay toll, unless the deceased person died in the parish in which the toll-gate stood and was taken for burial to the parish church. In 1727 an order was made that carts carrying "sope ashes" should pay at the same rate as coal-carts, "the greater part of such Sope being us'd for Manure."

The Act had provided that persons going to or from the parish church on Sunday should be exempt from toll, ignoring the claims of nonconformists. Perhaps for the benefit of the latter, or for worshippers at chapels of ease, the following order was made in 1731:

“ that all Horses, Coaches and other Carriages whatsoever going to or returning from any Parish Church or other Place of Divine Worship within any of the Parishes wherein the Roads to be repair'd under the said Act lye, upon Sundays, shall be exempted and excused from paying any Toll whatsoever.”

In 1737 there was a complaint that the collector at Huyton (who had recently been transferred from Roby, exchanging places with the former Huyton collector) levied tolls on empty carts and carriages, and he was ordered not to do so. In this case the collector was right, for the Act exempted only carts *returning* empty after having paid once. At the next meeting the matter was put right by a further order “ that both the Empty and Loaden Carts ought to Pay the first time they come thro',” and that all Collectors be notified of this fact. In previous years, presumably, the Huyton collector had been letting all empty carts pass free, while the Roby collector had rightly been making them pay the first time.

An order of June, 1728, runs :

“ Whereas it is Complain'd of that severall persons that Carry Mugs and other Goods for Hire do draw with more Horses than is allow'd by Act of Parliament, It is now Ordered that Notice be Affix'd at the Turnpike Gates that if they draw with more Horses than is Allow'd by Act of Parliament that they will be prosecuted as the Law directs.”

Carriers of earthenware, who paid a special toll of 8*d.* a cart, had evidently been trying to compensate themselves by taking very heavy loads requiring more than the legal maximum of six horses harnessed at length, or eight horses in pairs.¹

The Trustees were authorised by the Act to agree on compositions for tolls at their discretion. Compositions were therefore made with the Supervisor and other officers

¹ Stat. 6 Anne, c. 29, 1707-8, amending earlier laws.

of Excise, who frequently used the Prescott road,¹ for 30s. a year (1727); with Thomas Seel and Thomas Cobham, proprietors of the "glasshouse" at Prescott, for their "sope ashes," for 2 guineas a year (1727); with Joseph Jackson, waggoner between Liverpool and Warrington, through Roby gate, for 40s. a year, "as his Waggon is often empty or hath little Goods in it, and often goes the other Way over Childwall Hills in the Summer time" (1728); with William Marsh and John Okill of Liverpool, timber merchants, through Roby gate, for 200 loads of timber from Halsnead in Whiston, as they could avoid the gate by going over "Childwall Hills," for 50s. (1729); with certain carters of timber from Cranshaw near Farnworth, for the use of Richard Golightly of Liverpool, shipcarpenter, through Roby gate, for 4*d.* a load (1736). Care was taken, however, that the right of compounding should not be abused. For instance, the composition with "the waggoners" was terminated in 1737, "for that more Waggoners pass thro' the Turnpike than were represented." An application from Lord Derby in 1737² "to compound for the Tolls of all his Family and Servants and all Goods and Materials passing thro' the Turnpike to and from Knowsley on his Lordship's account" was held over for further consideration. An order of June, 1739, "that every Cart pay when Loaden," probably signifies a refusal to allow any further compounding for tolls on wheeled vehicles.

However careful the Trustees might be in safeguarding their revenue, they were to a large extent dependent on the integrity of their officials and servants. Serious leakages were possible through the negligence or dishonesty

¹ The following particulars are given: two "Officers of Excise" use the road three times a week and five times a fortnight respectively; the "Supervisor of Excise" (Mr. Law) once a fortnight; and the "Collector of Excise" with two assistants nine times a year.

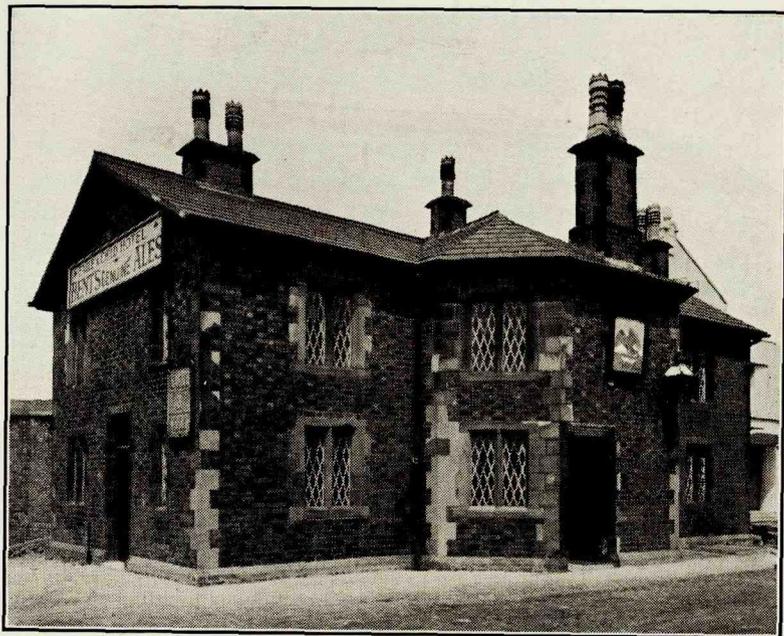
² Sir Edward Stanley, Bt., of Bickerstaffe succeeded to the earldom of Derby in 1736, on the failure of heirs in the direct line.

of the collectors, and even the Treasurer, as will appear, was not above suspicion.

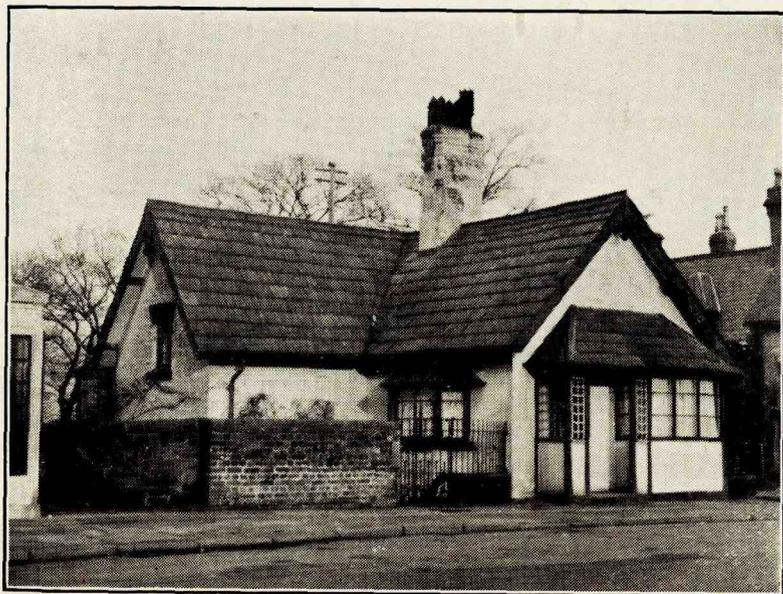
The collectors at Huyton and Roby gates began work, as we have seen, on 2 February, 1726/7, with salaries of £16 and £12 a year respectively and houses. Shortly afterwards, the Trustees provided a "shade" (shed) for a horse at each house, and agreed to allow each man annually 20s. for coals and 20s. for candles. In September, 1727, the collectors were ordered to bring in their accounts for inspection at the next meeting. Both failed to appear, being, the Trustees were told, "sick, and so Indispos'd that they cannot attend." They were therefore instructed to attend the *next* meeting, when they would swear to their accounts before those Trustees who were also Justices. On this occasion they duly appeared with their books, containing signed statements of all monies taken from the beginning, and deposed to their accuracy.

In August, 1729, a collector was first appointed for the Twig Lane stop-gate, with a salary of £4 a year and house. The same meeting ordered that all the collectors should bring in and swear to their accounts every quarter. In September, 1730, the wife of one collector, and the sister of another, testified that they had assisted in the collection of tolls, and had paid over the money without having "imbezled or misapply'd" any. In May, 1731, the Treasurer and Surveyor were instructed to appoint a suitable person as assistant at Huyton gate for the summer, "to keep a particular account of every Cart, Horse, etc., that passes thro' the Turnpike every Day"; the collector was to pay him, "or else leave off keeping Ale."

A curious episode, revealing a difference of opinion about the Treasurer's conduct, occurred in the autumn of 1731. The Treasurer and the collectors had been ordered to bring in their accounts on 7 September. Two

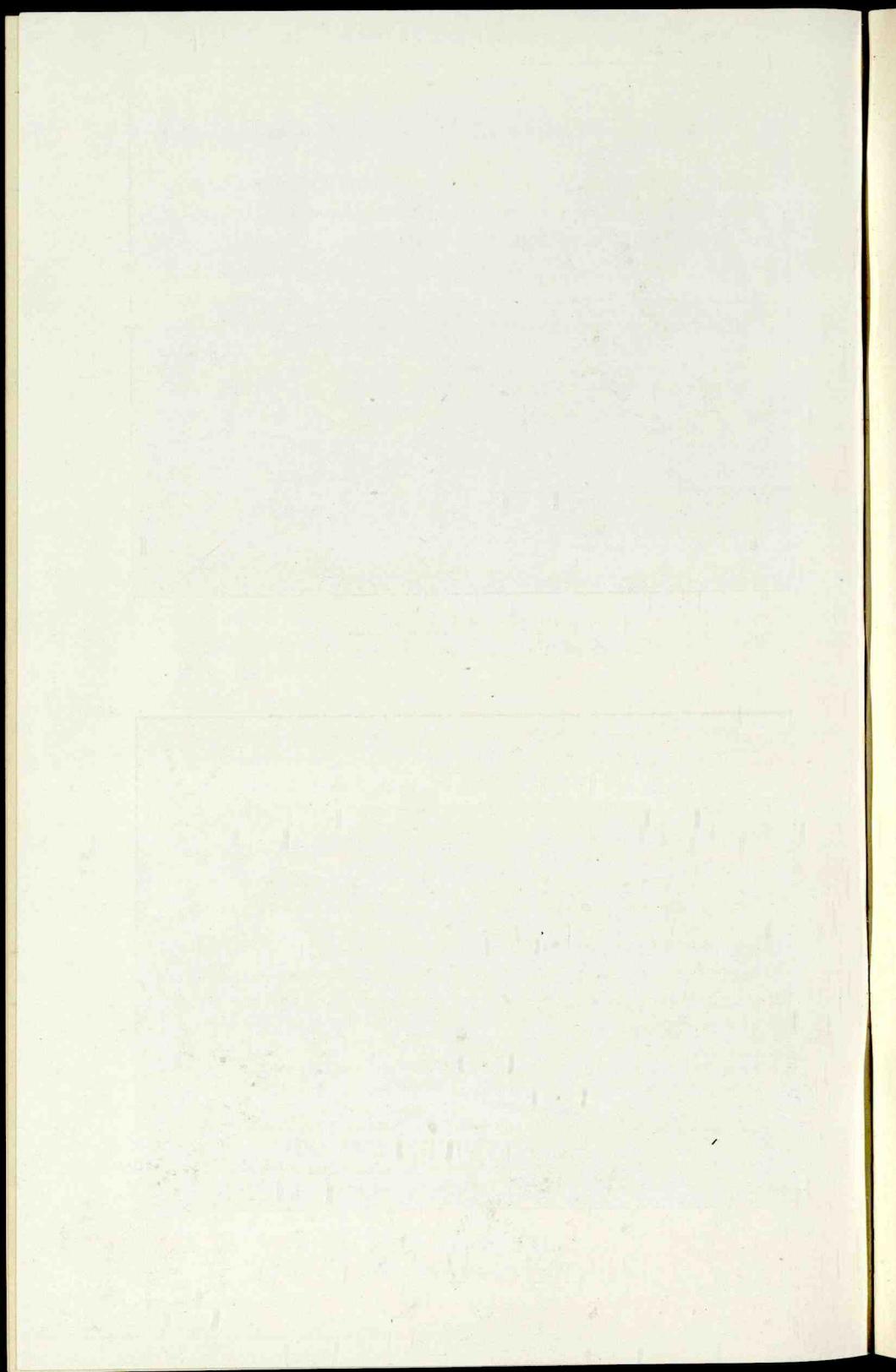


HUYTON TOLL-HOUSE
Rebuilt 1853. Demolished 1932



ROBY TOLL-HOUSE
(Photographed in 1937)

Facing page 182]



separate meetings, held on that day, are recorded in the Minutes. The first, attended by the Mayor of Liverpool (George Tyrer) and nine other Trustees,

“examined James Chadwick, Collector of the Tolls, upon oath to the truth of his Accounts, and Roger Walsh not attending, Adjourned to the first Tuesday in November next at this place.”

The second, attended by twenty Trustees, none of whom had been present at the first, and presided over by Thomas Brereton,¹ protested that the first had not been held at the proper hour, which “has been constantly taken to be at Two a'clock,” and declared that those who had already met

“there is good reason to beleive had some sinister intentions to prevent [the regular meeting] and to stifle the Accounts of some of the Officers, haveing taken upon themselves privately and clandestinely to Meet at one of the Clock on this day, the common time of Dineing, and without inspecting any Accounts of the several Officers, who were attending at Two of the Clock with their Accounts, save only the Accounts of James Chadwick, one of the Collectors, and then hastily Adjourned . . . to prevent any due Inspection thereof . . .

Now to prevent such secret practices and inconveniences for the future, and that every thing may be done for the benefit and advantage of the whole . . . without any sinister views or undue or irregular Meetings, It is therefore Ordered that all Meetings for the time to come . . . shall be at the hour of Two of the Clock in the Afternoon.”

This meeting also ordered that, since the Treasurer's absence prevented the proper examination of accounts, he and the collectors should be given notice to bring their

¹ Brereton had been M.P. for Liverpool, 1727-30, and subsequently represented the borough from 1734 until his death in 1754. He became Mayor in 1732. (Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, 1875, vol. 1, pp. 173-5.) At the time of this episode, party strife was raging in Liverpool over the claims of the Council and the burgesses, in which Brereton and Tyrer figured prominently as partisans of the former and the latter respectively. (Picton, *Liverpool Municipal Records*, vol. 2, 1886, pp. 86 ff.) It is uncertain whether Hamer played any part in these civic dissensions.

accounts to the next meeting, when those of Chadwick would be re-examined.

Two months later, thirty-one Trustees assembled, and, after considering the terms of the Act, decided that the adjournment ordered by the first September meeting was quite in order. Furthermore,

“ on reading a subsequent Entry made by Thomas Brereton and the several others who took upon them in an extraordinary manner to Meet the same day after that Adjournment made and enter'd, and on Observing the false and scandalous insinuations therein mencion'd : The Commissioners now present do Declare that the said subsequent Entry . . . was irregular and contrary to the Act of Parliament, and the same is now Order'd to be Expunged, which was done accordingly.”¹

A committee of four Trustees was then appointed to examine the books and accounts of the Treasurer and the collectors from the beginning, and report to the next meeting. The report of this committee is not recorded. None of the Trustees who attended the second September meeting were present in November, so we may surmise that this meeting also was held before 2 p.m. An order for the holding of all meetings at 2 p.m. was made at the next meeting, in March, 1731/2.

In July, 1732, we are told that complaints had been made that the collector at Huyton gate

“ hath of late been very negligent in attending the Gate, and that several persons with Horses have passed thro the Turnpike without paying any Toll, the Gate being open and no person there to receive the Toll.”

The Trustees therefore ordered that men should be appointed by the Surveyors for one month, on the most reasonable terms possible, to act as checks on the collectors at both Huyton and Roby. At the next meeting, a month later, the Surveyors were authorised to keep on the checks for another month.

¹ The expunging is done merely by cross-cancellation.

In 1736 the Trustees resorted to a new expedient. The collectors at Huyton and Roby gates were ordered to exchange places for one year. An order was also made

“ that the Collectors . . . shall give Ticketts for the future to every Person passing thro’ the Turnpikes with Horses, Carts, Coaches and all other Carriages, Cattle and Things whatsoever which are liable to Pay Toll, whether they require Ticketts or not, and in which Tickets respectively shall be expressed what the Carriages, and what the number of Horses, etc.”

From this we may infer that hitherto the collectors had not been required to give tickets to all who paid toll, but only to such travellers as might have occasion to return with their carts and waggons empty on the same day. There is nowhere any mention of obligation on the part of the Surveyors or anyone else to inspect tickets carried by travellers. A case of forgery of tickets occurred in 1740, the offender, an apprentice living in Knotty Ash, being prosecuted.

In March, 1736/7, the collectors were ordered to

“ constantly Lock the Gate when they leave it, and never suffer it to stand open or unlock’d but when Carts or Horses etc. are passing thro’, upon pain of being Discharg’d.”

In April, 1740,

“ it being now represented that the Collectors . . . are often negligent and Remiss in their attendance and Duty, and that it would be very necessary that some persons should be Delegated to reprimand, suspend or turn them out, and appoint another fitt person or persons in their Room and Stead till the next Meeting . . . when they are guilty of such or any misdemeanor,”

the Treasurer, Surveyor and a Trustee, John Cobham of Prescot, were selected accordingly. The Huyton collector was at the same time transferred to Roby for ill-conduct, and, a month later, he was

“ reprimanded for his late misbehaviour to Mr. John Cobham, who is so good as to excuse it, and Ordered to attend the Turnpike Gate at Roby on his good behaviour.”

A new collector, appointed at Huyton in 1740 "on giving sufficient security," was directed to

"give Ticketts to every person passing thorow that Gate, and Keep A particular account in writing how many pass every Day."

A little later he was granted

"liberty to build A Down Dubb or addition to the house¹ at his own charge, and to take it away, or be allowed what it shall be valled to be worth when he leaves it."

In May, 1741, he admitted that arrears were owing from sundry persons, which had not been recorded in his accounts. The Trustees therefore ordered

"that he Do not suffer any person or persons to pass for the future thro the Turnpike Gate with any horse, Cart or Carriage without first paying the Toll for the same."

In September, 1743, we are told that

"Upon a representation that allowing the Collectors of the Tolls to sell Ale and keep a Publick house at the Gates is of bad consequence, It is now Ordered that no Collectors for the future, or any other persons, shall Presume to Sell Ale or Spirituous liquors at or near either of the Turnpike Gates."

In consideration of this prohibition, the salaries of the collectors at Huyton and Roby were increased by £4 a year each.

Meanwhile, complaints had been received of misconduct by the collector at Twig Lane. In August, 1743, he was told he could remain for another quarter "on condition that he behaves himself well." The warning was apparently not needed, for another collector was appointed shortly after.

In September, 1743, John Cross of Liverpool, "gentleman," was appointed collector at Roby. His social

¹ The word "downdubb," which is not included in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, occurs also in the Prescot court rolls (L. and C. Record Society, vol. 89, 1937, p. 325).

status is surprising, but we must not assume that the position of a collector was then regarded as being too humble or disreputable to attract respectable men. The case of James Chadwick confirms this point. The previous occupations of collectors are sometimes stated; they included two tailors, a butcher and a bodicemaker. As we have seen, they were all expected to be sufficiently literate to keep accounts and inscribe tickets.

In March, 1733/4, a meeting attended by fifty Trustees appointed a committee to "inspect, examine and settle" the accounts of the Treasurer and the collectors, and ordered

"that Mr. Christopher Wade do Receive and Pay the Turnpike Moneys in Mr. Hamer's stead, untill the next Meeting, Mr. Wade being willing to undertake the same for Mr. Hamer's benefit."

The next meeting, three months later, ordered

"that Mr. Henry Hamer shall now immediately enter again upon his Office of Treasurer . . . his Accounts being Settled and all the Moneys which appears to have been received by him, paid, to the Ballance of Seventeen Pounds, Six Shillings and Six pence."

In May, 1736, the Trustees ordered

"that all the Books and Account of the several Officers of the Turnpike be Inspected, Examin'd and Settled every Six Months, comencing from the last Settlement thereof, the 30th April last."

In April, 1737, Mr. Hamer was called upon to renew his security in consequence of the death of his surety, Ralph Williamson. The latter's son, the Rev. Mr. John Williamson, agreed to undertake the responsibility. The Trustees then ordered

"that Mr. Hamer do Account for and Pay all the Moneys that arise from the Tolls into the hands of the said Mr. Williamson weekly, and that he forthwith Pay into the hands of the said Mr. Williamson the Ballance of 104*l.* 17*s.* 9½*d.* now remaining in the said Mr. Hamer's hands."

The turnpike trusts in general have been criticised for the extent to which they accumulated debts on the security of the tolls. We have seen that in September, 1726, a loan of £500 was authorised, to meet the costs of procuring the Act, and other initial charges. The costs of the Act alone amounted to over £360, and the making of the turnpike houses and gates, with thirty yards of pavement at each side, absorbed the remaining £140. In January, 1726/7, it was found necessary to increase the loan to £1,000. To facilitate this, certain Trustees consented to give personal security, they in turn being secured from the tolls. Evidently there had been difficulty in finding contributors, but this was now overcome, and the £1,000 was raised by the end of April, 1727. In the meantime, as we have seen, the original plan of a six-yards causeway had been modified. Even so, further sums had to be borrowed from time to time, namely, £200 in the autumn of 1727; £300 in the spring of 1728, and £200 in the spring of 1729. By the latter date, therefore, the tolls had become mortgaged to the amount of £1,700, paying interest at 5 per cent.

There can be no doubt that many Trustees regarded the financial position as far from satisfactory. The accusation made against the Treasurer of attempting to "stifle the accounts" in 1731, and the imposition of double checks on the collectors in 1731 and 1732, reflect the growing uneasiness. Doubtless there were real grounds for suspicion in each case, though in such circumstances the conduct of those who had the handling and spending of the money was bound to be severely scrutinised. The serious view of the situation is reflected also in orders for the reduction of salaries. The Clerk's salary, originally fixed at 15 guineas a year, was reduced in 1731 to 10 guineas, and in 1737 to 5 guineas. The Treasurer's salary was reduced in 1731 from 30 to 20 guineas. The Surveyor's salary of 30 guineas was con-

tinued throughout the period of the making of the new causeway, but after 1736, when the repair of the causeway was put out to contract, payment was discontinued. There was evidently a feeling that Mr. Martindale could now be dispensed with, but no order was made to this effect, and instructions were from time to time given to him in his official capacity. Eventually, in 1746, he was granted a salary of 10 guineas a year as from the last payment of his old salary 10½ years before.

The first decade (1726-36) was thus a period of great expenditure and indebtedness. The second decade, to the renewal of the Act in 1746, witnessed a gratifying return to almost complete solvency. Beginning in 1737, the debts were steadily paid off, and in 1746 the Trustees were able to assure the House of Commons that their net debt was only £31 10s. 5*d.* The chief factor in this improvement was doubtless the completion of the causeway, but we may also fairly assume that an increasing volume of traffic was augmenting the receipts from tolls. The Treasurer's accounts, were they available, would enable us to study this process in detail. We are not wholly in the dark as to the revenue of the toll-gates, for the Commons' *Journals* record that the total receipts during the nineteen years from February, 1727, to February, 1746, were £9,894 15s. 9¼*d.*¹ The receipts at Roby gate, in the years 1745-8 inclusive, are recorded in the Minutes, and even the Treasurer's annual balance-sheets are occasionally, from 1753 on, so recorded. Taking into consideration that the receipts were liable to vary considerably from year to year, and that alterations in the toll-schedule were made in 1746 and 1753, we may estimate that for some years prior to 1746 the approximate average annual revenue at Huyton gate had been £500, that at Roby gate £75, and that at Twig Lane gate £2. The last-named gate was run at a loss, but served the

¹ *H. of C. Journals*, vol. 25, p. 80.

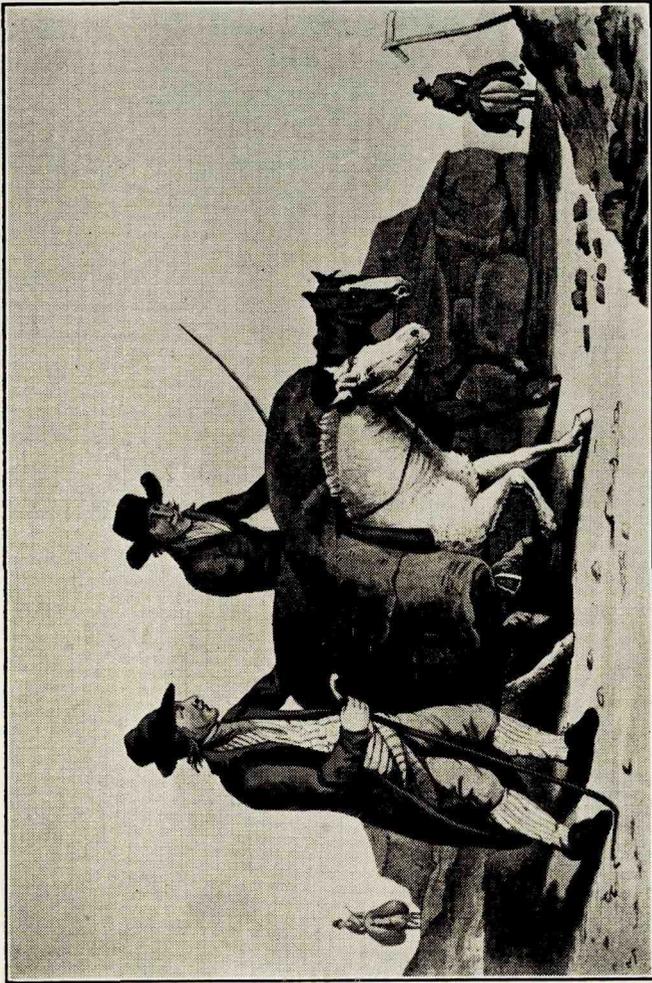
necessary purpose of preventing evasion of the main gates.

In September, 1738, William Peters "quitted" the office of Clerk, without making any formal resignation. Apparently he went on a visit to America, and decided to settle there.¹ His father, Ralph Peters, Town Clerk of Liverpool, decided to carry on in the place of his son. He was not formally appointed, and was paid no salary at the time, but attended the meetings as a Trustee and wrote the Minutes himself. After his death in December, 1742, Francis Gildart succeeded him both as Town Clerk and as Clerk to the Trustees. Gildart was formally appointed on 6 September, 1743, at a salary of 5 guineas a year. More than a year later, the Trustees decided to allow the same salary to the late Mr. Peters for the four years during which he had acted as Clerk.

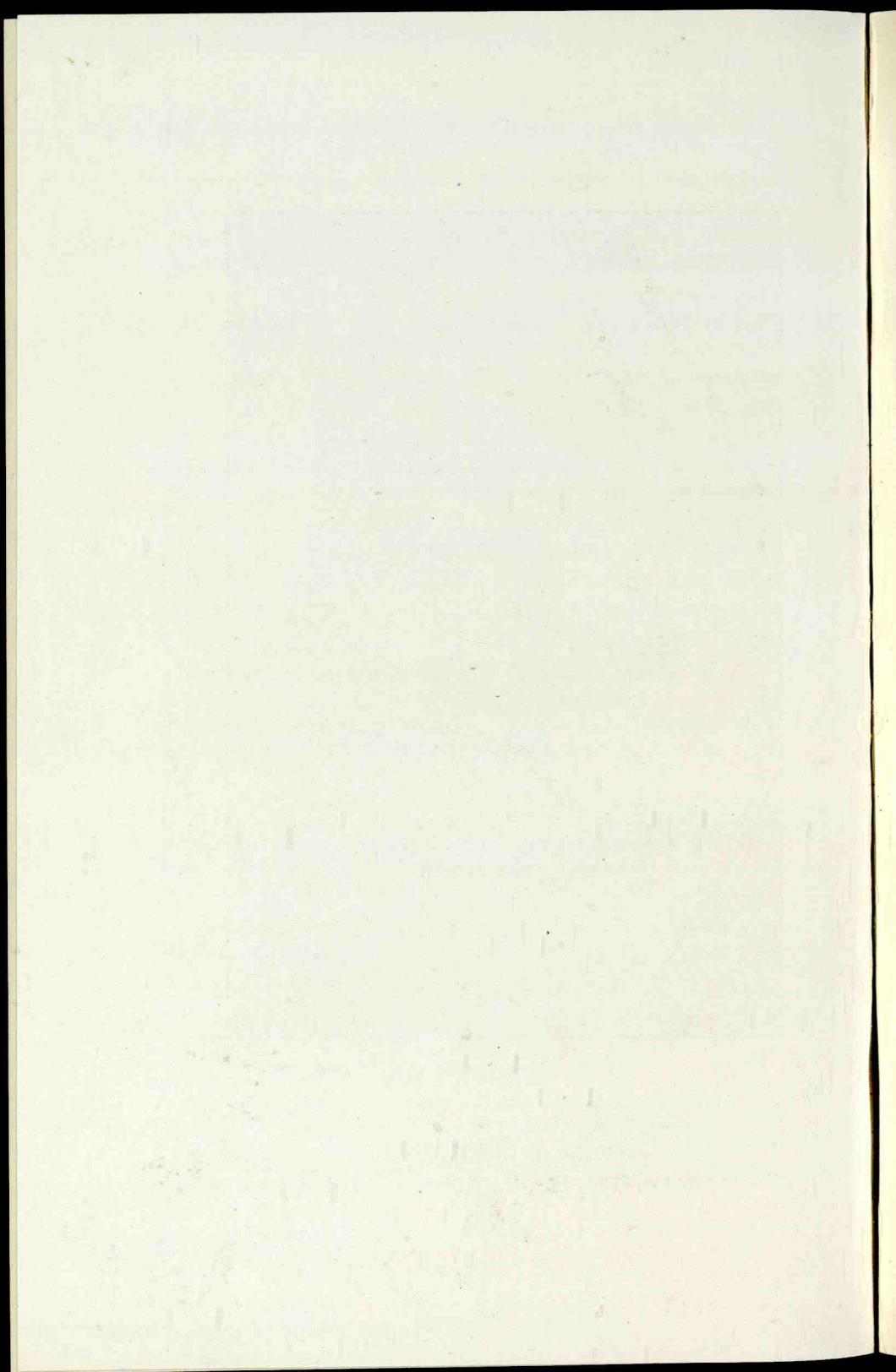
The Clerk performed legal as well as clerical work for the Turnpike. In May, 1733, William Peters had been allowed his "bill of costs" amounting to £5 5s. 3*d.* for defending the Surveyor in a "vexatious and groundless" suit brought in the Exchequer at Westminster by one Joseph Young, on account of the taking of some "shilly [shingle] and stones." To Francis Gildart fell the task of attending at Westminster when further Acts of Parliament were required for the continuation and extension of the Turnpike.

The first Act was due to expire in 1747. As early as February, 1744/5, a special meeting attended by thirty-four Trustees unanimously decided to apply for a second Act to renew the first, and to extend the turnpike to St. Helens, keeping the tolls unchanged. A petition, drafted by a special committee, was approved and signed four

¹ Mr. Stewart-Brown says, "His wife died prior to 1740, and William Peters then went to Philadelphia on a visit to his brother." In America he married again (1741), sat in the Pennsylvania Legislature, and became a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He eventually returned to England and died at Knutsford in 1789 (Hist. Soc. L. & C., vol. 60, p. 55).



PACK-HORSES CARRYING CLOTH.
(Walker's *Costume of Yorkshire*, 1814, reprinted 1885, Plate 2)



days later at a meeting of nineteen Trustees. The matter was then held up for about nine months, probably on account of difficulties in reaching agreement on details, and, possibly, the Jacobite rebellion. In November, 1745, a meeting of thirty-five Trustees ordered the preparation of a fresh petition; this was presented to Parliament in January, 1745/6. It stated that considerable sums had been raised by loans and tolls, and duly expended,

“ notwithstanding which, the said Roads are, from the many, and heavy, Carriages which daily pass thro’ them to Liverpool aforesaid, continually breaking up in different Places, and thereby rendered very bad, especially in the Winter Season,”

and that an extension of the Act would be necessary to enable them to be kept in repair, and loans to be paid off. It urged the taking over of the road from Prescot to St. Helens,

“ on the great Road leading to the Market-Towns of Bolton and Rochdale, and also to the County of York; and opening a Way to several Ranks of Coal-Pits, whereby all the Country adjacent, and particularly the Inhabitants of the Town of Liverpool (now become very numerous) and also the Shipping of the said Port, may be commodiously served both in Winter and Summer, with Coals; by the want of which they have greatly suffered of late, a great Part of the said Road being, in many Places, always in Winter, and frequently in Summer, so bad, that Carriages cannot pass.”¹

In February, 1746, Francis Gildart, the Clerk, and John Eyes, “ land surveyor,”² were instructed to go to London to solicit the Act, taking the Treasurer’s book of accounts. Mr. Eyes had no official position under the Turnpike, but was employed for the occasion as an expert witness.

The bills of Mr. Eyes and others are entered into the Minute Book, and give some interesting particulars. Mr.

¹ H. of C. *Journals*, vol. 25, p. 43.

² An account of the Eyes family of surveyors, and their work, by R. Stewart-Brown, is in *Hist. Soc. L. & C.*, vol. 62, pp. 143-74.

Eyes spent one day in surveying the road from Liverpool to St. Helens and from Blacklow Brow to Old Swan, and making a report, for which he charged 5 guineas. His visit to London occupied seventy-nine days at one guinea a day, not including horse-hire. We learn that the charge for hiring a horse for a journey to London was then 30s., a period of three weeks being allowed, any time in excess of this being charged for at the rate of one shilling a day.

Others too were employed to make particular investigations and give evidence. One man was sent to

“enquire whether the Statute work and 6*d.* in the Pound have been laid out on the highroads in the township of Eccleston, and to learn of all the Auditors of the Colepits beyond Prescott what persons have their Coles from those Pitts.”

The proposal to extend the Turnpike to St. Helens aroused considerable opposition at first, especially from the colliery interests in and around Prescot. There was also opposition from the Wigan area, from which coal could be sent to Liverpool by water as a result of the Douglas Navigation scheme.¹ Both at Prescot and Wigan there was evidently a fear that the competition of St. Helens coal would force down the price. The making of the Sankey Canal, by which St. Helens coal could be taken to Liverpool by water, was not begun until ten years after this date. Joseph Valens, of the Liverpool Dock Office, spent four days in March, 1746, at Billinge, Wigan, Golborne, Ashton and Newton, soliciting signatures for a petition in favour of the bill. Nevertheless, a petition was sent from these places, either shortly before or shortly after his visit, *against* the bill. Early in April, Valens went again to Wigan, “when the Petition was Signed for the bill by the same Persons and in the same

¹ An Act, for making the River Douglas navigable to Wigan, was passed in 1719, but the work does not seem to have been completed before 1727.

order as they had Signed a petition against the bill." We are not told what inducements, or threats, were used to effect this wholesale capitulation. Several amendments to the bill were made in committee, and it received the royal assent on 4 June, 1746.

In the course of his evidence before Parliament, Mr. Eyes stated that " he had heard the Trustees intimate a Design " to widen the causeway between Liverpool and Prescott to enable carriages to pass each other. He thought that the work would cost about £4,000.

" Being asked, Whether the Road was not of late much damaged, by the great Number of Carriages which pass from Liverpoole to Warrington ? he said, That since the Commencement of the War with France, Canon, and other Military Stores, are frequently carried to Liverpoole by Land ; but that the manufactures of Liverpoole, except such as are sent upon Pack-horses, are mostly conveyed to Warrington by Water ; but he acknowledged, That there are some Goods carried in Waggon, which commonly go the Prescott road, because it is better than that through Roby, though the latter is the nearest Way."

He thought that Liverpool would reap the greatest benefit from the extension of the Turnpike to St. Helens, though the whole country adjacent would also benefit. He did not think it would be detrimental to the collieries at Prescott, because they were three miles nearer, and persons would naturally go there if they could be as well and as cheaply supplied. Of the money now raised by tolls, he asserted, four-fifths was paid by the inhabitants of Liverpool. He estimated that the cost of keeping in repair the road from Liverpool to Prescott, at its present breadth, would be £200 a year.¹

Although, as we have seen, the Trustees did not at first intend to apply for alterations in tolls, such were in fact made. They were probably among the amendments

¹ H. of C. *Journals*, vol. 25, p. 80.

that we noted, introduced in order to placate opposition. The Act explains that

“complaints have been made, that the Tolls and Duties laid upon Coaches and Chariots, and also upon Carts and Carriages carrying Earthen Ware, Glass and Cast Iron . . . have been burthensome.”

Accordingly, the tolls on coaches, chaises, carts and all other vehicles except waggons were fixed at the rate of 1*d.* per horse. The toll on separate horses was reduced from 1*d.* to $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* The discriminatory tolls on the carriage of coal and earthenware were removed, all horses and vehicles (save waggons) now being allowed the terms previously enjoyed only by those carrying coal. The toll on waggons, on the other hand, was raised from 1*s.* to 2*s.*, the latter being apparently the more normal figure at this date. The decreases of toll were therefore to some extent counterbalanced by this increase. The toll on cattle and sheep remained as before. Toll on “back carriage,” which had been payable hitherto, was now removed, so that carts, etc., returning on the same day through the same gate were not to pay again even if loaded.

The Act forbade the setting up of any more toll-gates. It provided that the road from Blacklow Brow to Old Swan should be repaired before that from Prescot to St. Helens. The Treasurer was authorised to compound for statute work, and to examine the collectors on oath. The Trustees were authorised to appoint new collectors in place not only of those who died, but also of those guilty of misconduct. In the event of there not being a quorum of Trustees at any meeting, the Clerk was empowered to put up notices of the next meeting on the turnpike gates, at least ten days previously. In this manner the second Act settled a number of practical difficulties which had not been provided for in the first.

For the paving of the road from Roby to Old Swan, the Trustees decided to invite tenders by public notice. In November, 1746, a contract was made with John Swift and two other paviors, who offered

“to find Stones, Sand and workmanship at the rate of 16½*d.* per yard, Vizt. after the rate of £1. 13. 0. per Rood, at Three yards broad, the Turnpike paying for the Land where the Sand is to be gott, he haveing Liberty to get the Sand where he shall think most Convenient, and . . . to Lay the Sand a foot thick under the Causeway, and will do it Workmanlike, if you Please to Lay money down for the Stones as they are Discharged, and when the work . . . is finished, to be measured and paid for, only Please to Lend us a Barrow, Beater and a stone Barrell [roller]. And we desire to know if you will have Greet side Stones from Swan Lane.”

The Trustees stipulated that the width of three yards should be “on the flatt measure, then the rounding of the Causeyway will make it near 4 yards, but they are to be paid flatt measure, Three yards.”

In July, 1748, the contractors complained that Isaac Greene Esq. “refuses to Suffer them to get Stones and other Materials on Childwall Common without paying for the Same, contrary to the Tenor of the Act of Parliament.” The Trustees ordered that notice be given to Mr. Greene (the lord of the manor) to meet them at Childwall to view the materials and discuss the question of liability. The outcome of the conference is not stated. Greene’s objections may have been based on the fact that the turnpike road did not actually pass through the township of Childwall.

Though entitled to take materials from waste ground without payment, the Trustees had to compensate the owners for the use of enclosed land. In 1745 they agreed to pay £80 an acre for the use of certain land for getting sand, and to make good the fencing. In 1749 they agreed to pay twenty-eight years’ value for some land near Low Hill, for getting materials, estimating on the basis of the

“letting Value or improved rent.” In the previous year the Surveyor had been directed to “View what Places are most proper on the Road to get Sand in for the Pavers, And Set it out for them.” A further source was tested in 1746, when the Trustees ordered

“that Mr. Martindale be empowered to Agree with any Carters or other Persons for the Carting forty or fifty Tons of Sand from the Sea Side at Liverpoole and lay it at the Town’s end in Order to Use it on the Turnpike road or Payment [*sic*] as a trial.”

From time to time orders were made for the viewing and valuing of land in private possession where the paviers had procured sand or stone.

In May, 1749, Mr. Martindale, “having become infirm,” was asked to resign the office of Surveyor, and John Yates, a Trustee, was appointed in his place. His first task, in company with four advisers, was to examine the state of the road between Prescot and St. Helens. They reported

“that so much of the said Road as Will Want Putting into Good Order for Cart Carriages may be Done by raising about Twelve foot in Breadth of the Lanes Adjoining to the Causeways a proper heighth with Earth and Rubbish which lyes near in many Places, by removeing it from the Opposite Side of the Lane, will be a Good foundation for being well Covered with Gravel laid a Little Sheding [*sloping*] from the Causeway, by this Means we are of Opinion it will Answer a Good Purpose by Prepareing it for a Pavement, which may not be Wanted of Some Years, and We find a Good Gravel and Plenty of it in two Places, one at Eccleston Hill, the other at Copt Holt.”

This statement, though rather wanting in lucidity, is valuable as being the only account of the situation of the new causeway in relation to the road as a whole. At one side was the horse causeway; from this the cart causeway extended over the middle of the road; and a considerable portion of the highway at the other side

remained in the natural state. The Trustees instructed Yates to proceed with the work, spending not more than £200, and "takeing Care to begin where the Greatest Necessity is." He was to advertise for carters and labourers by public notice at Prescot and St. Helens, and was to employ an overseer to be in constant attendance.

Several weeks later, complaint was made that workmen getting gravel in Whiston had been molested, and the gravel carried off. Whiston people doubtless resented the use of their land for a road which did not actually pass through their township, the more so as the road to Warrington, which did pass through Whiston, had not as yet been turnpiked. The Trustees resolved that the Surveyor and workmen were to be defended in any actions brought against them, and that persons who obstructed them were to be prosecuted.

In August, 1749, the collector at Roby complained that his house was too small, "by reason of the enlargement of his family," so the Trustees sanctioned the building of an additional room. This was done at a cost of £25 9s. 11d. Four months later the Huyton collector appealed for extra accommodation for *his* family. After some delay, the Trustees authorised certain alterations. The collector however took the liberty of ordering extra work without authority, with the result that, in addition to a bill of £18 10s., there was a surcharge bill of £9 15s. 5¼d. The collector was instructed to attend a meeting of Trustees to discuss the matter, but "refused," whereupon they ordered "that it be not allowed him." The Treasurer was to pay both bills, and to stop the surcharge out of the collector's salary.

The following order was made in September, 1752 :

"that it be advertized in the Publick Papers that the Commissioners of the Turnpike will Let the Tolls of the Prescot [or Huyton] Gate and Twigg Lane in one Lott, And the Tolls of

Roby Gate in another Lott, for the Term of three Years from Candlemas next, to the Highest Bidder. Any Persons Inclined to take the said Gates or either of them must send in their Proposals . . . on or before the Sixth Day of November next."

Whether the Trustees reconsidered this decision, or whether no satisfactory proposals were forthcoming, does not appear, but the plan of letting the tolls was certainly not carried out at this time.

Serious difficulties arose with the Treasurer in this period. Henry Hamer, the original Treasurer, had been succeeded by his son, also named Henry, in May, 1740. He had not actually resigned, but had explained that he was "so indisposed and weak" that he could not continue, and had proposed that his son should take his place, "for the benefit of his father and Mother," giving the same security. The Trustees, moved apparently by charitable considerations, had complied. Ten years later, we find that the new Treasurer had grown dilatory in submitting the annual statement of accounts due after the end of each financial year in June. In August, 1750, he was ordered "to bring in his Accounts Peremptorily" at the next meeting, "and also to Acquaint the Commissioners if he intends to Resign." A further order, fixing a day for the presentation of the accounts, was made in the following December. In May, 1751, he was again "peremptorily" ordered to do the like, and to renew his security, for the gentleman who had been his surety was dead. In February, 1752, Hamer at last resigned, and John Yates, the Surveyor, took his place, combining the offices of Treasurer and Surveyor.

Trouble with Hamer continued. A committee was appointed to examine and report on his accounts. In June, 1752, Hamer was "peremptorily" ordered to deliver his accounts to the committee, "or on Refusal thereof that they take Proper Measures to Compell him so to Do." Two months later, the Trustees ordered

“ that Mr. Hamer Do return Satisfactory Answer why he doth not bring in his Accounts, and bring them in in Ten days . . . or that he then be Sued without further Notice.”

One month later we are told

“ Mr. Hamer having been Served with a Copy of the Order Made the last Meeting in regard to Producing his Accounts, and not having Complied . . . It is Ordered that the Town Clerk Do Sue Mr. Hamer either at Law or Equity, as shall be most adviseable to Compell him to Settle his Accounts . . . ”

This order was evidently not carried out. Two months later, Richard Ward of Liverpool, grocer, was authorised to examine and settle the accounts, Mr. Hamer being directed to hand over to him his books. Hamer was still refusing in August, 1753, but in October Ward had settled the accounts, finding a balance of £32 19s. 0½*d.* owing by Hamer to the Turnpike. For nine years more the Trustees continued to demand payment, but whether the money was eventually paid, or whether, as seems more likely, they finally abandoned all hope of recovering it, we are not told.

In conclusion, we must consider the question, how does this turnpike trust compare with others? Ought it to be classed among the good, the indifferent, or the bad? The question is difficult to answer with absolute certainty, because the necessary material for exact comparison is lacking. No Minutes of other trusts, or detailed accounts of their work, belonging to so early a period, have been published. We must therefore base our verdict on the observations of authorities dealing with the history of the turnpike system as a whole.

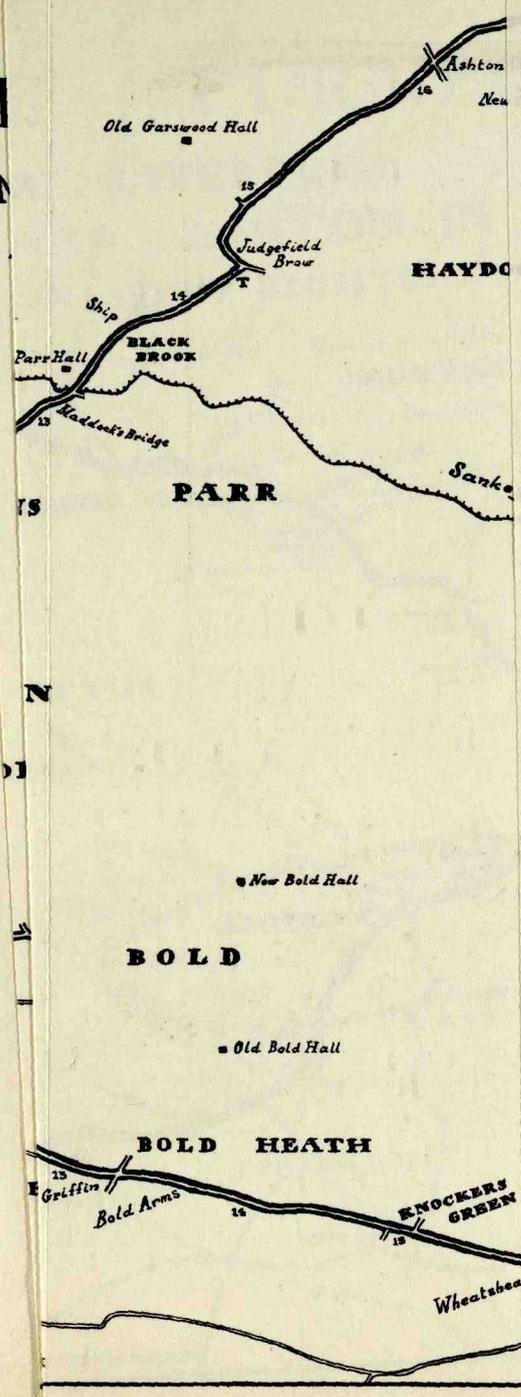
Turnpike trusts in general have been subjected to severe criticism. Inefficiency, extravagance, malversation and jobbery were, we are told, only too common. Salaried officers, competent Surveyors, and collectors capable of keeping accounts, were rarely employed. Officers and

servants were not called upon to give security ; Collectors regularly kept back part of each day's takings ; Treasurers habitually made private profit from the money in their custody, and were not checked by any efficient system of audit ; Surveyors were allowed to act as contractors for the very work which they were appointed to supervise ; the Trustees themselves found many opportunities of turning the system to their advantage. Huge loads of debt were contracted, in some cases actually leading to the seizure of the roads by the mortgagees. The work of road repair was often poor, unsystematic, and inadequate, so that the quality of the roads in general showed very little improvement before 1750.¹

The Turnpike which we are considering assuredly had defects, but they were defects common to most if not all such trusts. On the other hand, it was free from faults prevalent elsewhere, to so marked a degree that there need be little doubt as to its being above the average in its methods and achievements. The character of the Minutes themselves lends weight to this conclusion. Nor indeed is this verdict surprising, in view of the circumstances which called the Turnpike into being. Unlike many others, it did not exist principally as a means of transferring a burden from the shoulders of local landholders to those of passers-by. The road was not merely a convenience for strangers, but a vital necessity for the commercial and industrial interests of the town and district of Liverpool. The Turnpike was, in short, an instrument in the hands of practical men, for the execution of a practical task. By careful and prudent management, it succeeded, without incurring any unduly heavy financial liability, in carrying out what was, for the times, a notable accomplishment in road construction.

¹ Jackman, *Development of Transportation in Modern England*, vol. I, 1916, p. 211.

HI
ON



HAYDON

PARR

BOLD

BOLD HEATH

KNOCKERS GREEN

ASHTON
MARKET

Wheatbea
Duckhite (Copp)

BRING
TON
S.Wood

S
N

ECCLESTON

OT

TON

ASHTON IN
MAKERFIELD

WINDLE

HAYDOCK

ST. HELENS

PARR

SUTTON

BOLD

BOLD HEATH

WARRING-
TON

Eccleston Hall
Bird i'th Hand
Eccleston Arms
Croppers Hill
Eccleston Hill
Maids Lane Ends

Kitt's Bridge

Parr Hall

BLACK BROOK

Ship

Judgefield Brow

Sankey

Navigation

Warrington to Wigan
Turnpike (1776)

COPT HOET

Kenwright's Cross

RAINHILL

Rainhill Stoops

Wild Mare

Stag & Griffin

Bold Arms

KNOCKERS GREEN

SANKEY CHAPEL

Wheatbeaf

Hood Lane

SANKEY BRIDGES

BANK QUAY

R. Mersey

CRONTON

FARNWORTH

Old Garswood Hall

Ashton Cross
New Hall

New Bold Hall

Old Bold Hall

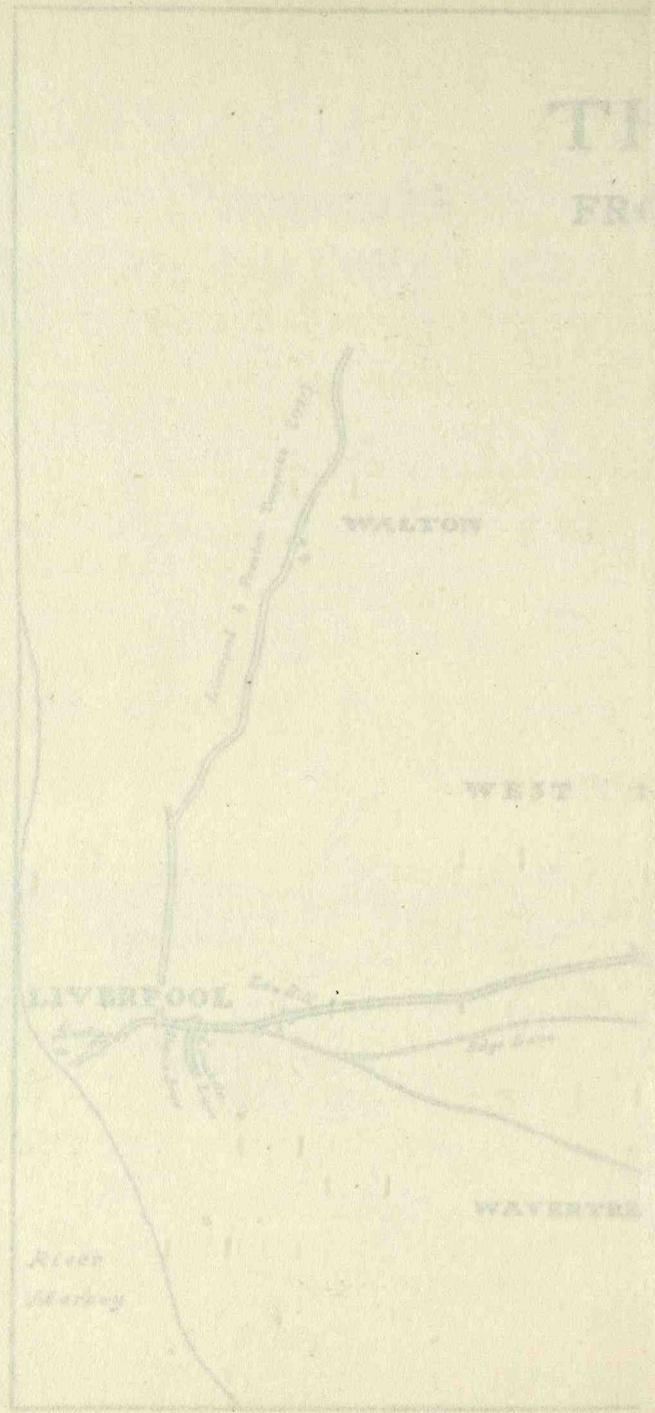
ELLAR'S
BEEN

London
Lane Ends

L.A.S.

1842

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